

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 – 18 (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A method of administering payment for obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer account, a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file having a purchase parameter including a value predetermined by the customer;

creating an administrative program in electronic communication with the administrator and having a merchant approval program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the purchase parameter in response to a transaction approval request;

transmitting a transaction approval request from the merchant approval program to the customer file to query the purchase parameter;

receiving at the merchant approval program a transaction approval request;

transmitting an approval of the transaction approval request when the request falls within the purchase parameter;

transmitting a payment instruction from the administrator in response to the approval of the transaction;

providing a notification program, the notification program transmitting a notice to a customer of activity on the customer account.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 48 19, wherein the notification program transmits a notice to a customer in real-time.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claims ~~48~~ 19, wherein the administrator includes a customer interface, the customer interface being operable to permit access to the customer account.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the notification program is operable to transmit a notice to a customer at a predetermined time following the occurrence of activity on the customer account.

23. (Previously presented) An administration apparatus for directing payments for financial obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the apparatus comprising:

an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the purchase parameter being predefined by the customer, the administrative program including a merchant approval program and a collection program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the customer file in response to approval request.

24. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the customer file further comprises a customer identifying statistic.

25. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 24, wherein the customer identifying statistic is selected from a group consisting of: customer name, customer address, customer telephone number, customer social security number, customer date of birth and customer bank account number.

26. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for a purchase.

27. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for all purchases within a predetermined period of time.

28. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the database further comprises a merchant file.

29. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 28, wherein the merchant file includes a merchant category.

30. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the customer file includes a payment option.

31. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises an account opening program.

32. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises a notification program.

33. (Previously presented) The administration apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises a customer account interface.

34. (Previously presented) A method of administering payments for transactions made by a customer that is a consumer of goods or services from a merchant, the method comprising:

providing an administrator;

creating a database in electronic communication with the administrator having a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the merchant file having a merchant account number and a merchant category assigned thereto, the purchase parameter including a value predetermined by the customer;

creating an administrative program in electronic communication with the administrator and having a merchant approval program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the purchase parameters in response to a transaction approval request;

transmitting a transaction approval request from the merchant approval program to the customer file to query the purchase parameter;

receiving at the merchant approval program a transaction approval request;

transmitting an approval of the transaction approval request when the request falls within the purchase parameter.

35. ((Previously presented)) The method of claim 34, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for a purchase.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for all purchases within a predetermined period of time.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of transmitting an electronic notice in real time to a customer.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously presented) An administration apparatus for directing payments for financial obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the apparatus comprising:

an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the purchase parameter being predefined by the customer, the merchant file including merchant banking information, the administrative program including a merchant approval program, the

merchant approval program being operable to query the customer file in response to approval request.